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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/19/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER SCHEDULES EXPERT-LEVEL NEIGHBORS  
CONFERENCE PREPARATORY MEETINGS SEPTEMBER 8-9 IN BAGHDAD

Classified By: Classified by Political Counselor Matt Tueller for Reasons 1.4d/b

¶1. (C) In a letter delivered on August 19, Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari invited Ambassador Crocker to an experts-level meeting the GOI plans to host September 8-9 in Baghdad. The gathering is intended to set the groundwork for the expanded Neighbors ministerial scheduled for October in Istanbul. The Foreign Minister told PolCounselor that the Prime Minister is the driving force behind the Baghdad venue, which he anticipates will present logistical challenges for a number of the invitees. Zebari had been in favor of a meeting on the margins of the September 4-6 Arab League ministerial in Cairo. Foreign Ministry sources tell us that the Ministry has sent meeting invitations to the neighbors (Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Iran) and the P5 and G8 countries, but so far has received no replies.

¶2. (C) Embassy Baghdad will track replies with the MFA. We will engage countries with local representation here in Baghdad and encourage them to send delegations. If host governments in neighboring countries ask embassies about the preparatory meeting, we recommend that they be urged to deliver a prompt, positive response to the GOI invitation.  
CROCKER